

March 1, 2012

General Assembly
Labor and Public Employees Committee
Room 3800, Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

RE: S.B. 150 – An Act Concerning Family and Medical Leave Benefits for Certain Municipal Employees

Senator Prague, Representative Zalaski, and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee:

My name is Timothy Riddle, and I've been a paraprofessional in the Brookfield school district for the past ten years. Despite being considered a full time employee by the Brookfield school district, I do not have the same rights as other school employees, as paraprofessionals are not currently eligible to receive family medical leave.

As I get older, concerns about my health and medical needs are increasing. That's part of life and something many of us confront as we age. But it troubles me that if I, or someone in my family were to become ill, and I had to take more time off than my sick time allowed, my job would not be protected and I could easily lose my livelihood, just because I fell through a loophole in the FMLA law. That's not right.

Paraprofessionals are full time employees and we need to be treated the same as other school employees, which is why I am submitting testimony voicing my support for Senate Bill 150, An Act Concerning Family and Medical Leave Benefits for Certain Municipal Employees.

Thank you for your time and attention to this critical matter.

Timothy Riddle
Special Education Paraprofessional, Brookfield Schools

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LABOR AND PUBLIC EMPLOYEES COMMITTEE HEARING 3/1/2012

S.B. NO. 150 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE BENEFITS FOR CERTAIN MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES.

Good afternoon Senator Prague, Representative Zalaski and the members of the committee:

My name is Christine Smith, I'm a resident of Manchester and I am here today to speak about S.B. No. 150- An act concerning family and medical leave benefits for certain municipal employees.

I am in favor of this bill. I've been a proud Hartford Paraprofessional for over 15 years and being a part of a team of educators. On Saturday, February 11, 2012, I was supposed to testify on behalf of paraprofessionals and our importance in education and educating our children. Due to a family situation I was unable to attend. While my main concern and focus was toward my son, I couldn't help but feel relieved that this happened on a weekend and he didn't have an extended stay. Even though, as of right now I have a sufficient amount of sick time to utilize if needed, but what if I didn't? I would be walking in the same shoes that other paras have walked in before me. I believe most of us try balancing our professional lives with our personal lives and this bill will give us the opportunity to have more employment stability. When faced with unexpected events and medical emergencies the last thing that anyone needs to worry about is if their job will still be there when they return.

I work diligently as well as several paraprofessionals. The passing of this bill would make it a lot easier for those who may need the time to look after a loved one and may not have accumulated sick time available for one reason or another. It will allow us to be one step closer to receiving more recognition that we are part of "The Team"

We as paraprofessionals deserve this benefit. Please support S.B. 150.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Smith

(Paraprofessional)